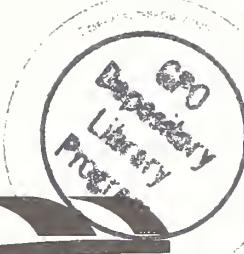


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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2649

February 11, 1994

USDA FY 1995 BUDGET -- The USDA budget for Fiscal Year 1995 is \$61.7 billion, \$3.6 billion lower than the 1994 level. The budget is designed to streamline USDA by reducing its agencies from 43 to 29, and closing or consolidating 1,100 county offices in the creation of 2,500 one-stop Field Office Service Centers. The budget would require farmers participating in certain USDA programs to carry basic crop insurance. The budget expands export programs to \$8.4 billion. Commodity support programs will total \$9 billion, down from \$12.1 billion in FY 1994. Increased funding for 116,000 rural housing units will create 45,000 new jobs. Rural business loan guarantees will be increased nearly \$1 billion. The \$1.5 billion in water and waste disposal programs will create 34,000 jobs. The Women, Infants and Children food programs will increase \$353 million to \$3.6 billion. The Wetlands Reserve Program includes \$241 million to enroll 300,000 new acres. Food safety, research and Extension programs will be expanded. Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.

WHAT'S HOT -- Trade liberalization has played a key role in boosting sales to key consumer food markets such as Canada, Japan and Mexico. Since the United States-Canadian Free Trade Agreement lowered tariffs on U.S. exports, U.S. consumer food sales to Canada hit a record \$3.8 billion in FY 1993, with 10 categories of food hitting new highs. Since Mexico lowered its tariffs and licensing requirements, U.S. exports surged to \$1.3 billion in 1993. Canada and Japan account for half of U.S. consumer food sales, and Mexico ranks as our third largest single-country market. Among best prospects for U.S. consumer food exports are Hong Kong, where record highs were set in 13 categories, and Taiwan where new records were set in 11 of 16 consumer food categories. Contact: Michael Dwyer (202) 720-1294.

HIGH VALUE TREND -- High value products are an expanding component of the U.S. export picture. In FY 1993 high value product exports totaled \$24 billion. They have risen from 31 percent of total agricultural exports in 1980 to 56 percent in FY 1993. These gains are offsetting declines in traditional bulk commodities such as wheat, corn and soybeans. The biggest gains in FY 1993 were in fruit, fruit juice and vegetable exports to Canada, Japan and the EC. The trend toward greater exports of high-value products is expected to continue this year. Steve MacDonald (202) 219-0822.

AIR QUALITY -- Studies show that poor air circulation in closed livestock and poultry buildings allows concentration of dust from feed, and ammonia fumes from animal waste that lead to respiratory illness in animals and humans. A university of Iowa study reveals that teenagers who work for prolonged times in enclosed swine houses have a greatly reduced lung capacity, the result of damaged bronchial tubes. Scientists at the University of Georgia have found that fine dust in poultry houses causes coughing, stress and disease transmission through respiratory and circulatory systems. Studies are underway on damage to lung tissue of broilers. Contact: Dan Rahn (912) 681-5189.

NEW APPOINTEE -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has named P. Scott Shearer as deputy assistant secretary for congressional relations at USDA. Shearer will help direct the legislative efforts of the Department. Before joining USDA, Shearer served as director of legislative affairs for a bio-science, agricultural seed and pharmaceutical firm in Wilmington, DE. Shearer has a M.S. degree from the University of Illinois in agriculture economics. Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.

SAVING FOOD -- The most likely problem to occur whenever disaster strikes is a power outage. Sometimes food can be saved and protected. If the room temperature is above freezing a refrigerator should stay cold for about one day, if the door remains closed. A full-loaded free-standing freezer will keep foods frozen for two days if the door stays closed. If the power outage will last more than two days try to buy "dry ice" for the freezer. Don't use "dry ice" in the refrigerator, use block ice. After floods, sanitize undamaged canned goods by removing the label and washing the cans with a brush in strong detergent and soak the cans in a solution of two teaspoons of chlorine bleach per quart of water at room temperature. Most other foods subjected to flood waters should be discarded. For tips on saving food after a disaster call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline, 1-800-535-4555. Contact: Larry Mark (202) 720-3310.

SILAGE RESEARCH -- Corn is the number one silage, but soybeans potentially can produce more protein. USDA researchers have grown a variety of soybean that reaches 6 feet tall, twice the height of varieties grown for grain. The hay-type soybeans can open the way to a new dairy silage for sustainable farming systems. Silage is plant material, mainly leaves and stems, that is pickled by natural microorganisms to yield long-lasting nutritious feed. The best experimental soybean lines will be tested this year in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Silage varieties could be available in three years. Contact: Thomas Devine (301) 504-6375.

FARM LABOR -- Labor is the single largest expense on fruit, vegetable, and horticultural speciality farms. A number of issues are developing that can affect the supply of labor and its costs. Consumer demand for fruits and vegetables should remain high and production is expected to continue expanding, increasing the demand for labor. Modification of agricultural trade policies could alter the flow of fruits and vegetables between the U.S. and other countries, affecting the demand for labor. Changes in the immigration law or its enforcement could also impact the farm labor supply. Changes in federal laws, regulations and programs such as workplace protections for hired farmworkers, and farmworker assistance programs could impact the number of farm jobs available. Mechanization is not expected to increase on fruits, vegetable, and horticultural farms unless labor costs rise. Contact: Shannon Hamm (202) 219-0886.

BETA CAROTENE STUDY -- USDA researchers are reviewing the diets of women aged 19 to 50 to determine the main contributors of the common carotenoids. The study is part of an effort to assess the anti-cancer value of beta carotene and other carotenoids. Carotenoids are a group of nearly 600 yellow, orange and red pigments that give foods like carrots, peaches, squash and tomatoes their distinctive colors. Leafy green vegetables also have the compounds but are masked by the green color of chlorophyll. Carrots, canteloupe and broccoli supply the most beta carotene. Joanne Holden (301) 504-8186.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1914 -- The USDA budget proposal for FY 1995 is a basic outline of the Department's proposed reorganization and where USDA intends to place its priorities. Gary Crawford reports. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1396 -- Health care in rural areas; USDA budget focuses on consumer issues; food safety when disaster strikes; where are your oats coming from?; craving for carrots. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1906 -- New budget proposal affects farm programs; USDA reorganization gets Congressional attention; guard cows for sheep; some help for oats; to BST or not to BST. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1659 -- Boosting vitamin E; vitamin E & malaria; sterilizing mosquitoes; microbes vs. mosquitoes; weight loss inequity. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.) Headsup. This series will cease production next month. The final tape of the series will be #1663, mailed March 8, 1994. The Agricultural Research Service information in the series will be incorporated into the Consumer Time and Agritape Features segments of the weekly cassette. The number of cuts in these two series will be expanded as necessary to accomodate the research stories.

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, February 16, milk production; Friday, February 18, ag outlook, U.S. farm trade update; Monday, February 21 HOLIDAY; Tuesday, February 22, crop & weather update, wheat outlook, livestock update; Wednesday, February 23, poultry outlook, daity outlook, catfish processing; Thursday, February 24, cotton & wool outlook, world tobacco update; Friday, February 25, ag export outlook; Monday, February 28, ag prices; Tuesday, March 1, crop & weather update. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on wood composites.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crops; USDA budget analyst Steve Dewhurst on the proposed budget for FY 1995.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on livestock and poultry. Pat O'Leary reports on precision farming.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT; Saturdays 10:00 a.m., EDT; Mondays 8:00 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

CONTRACT FARMING...for the production of chickens is a major interest for producers served by Miles Carter (KMZU/KOAL/KTRX, Carrollton, MO). Teresa Reische covered for the stations the Mid Missouri Ag Expo, in Sedalia, which offered information about raising poultry and the new processing plant being constructed near Sedalia. Miles also says conditions this winter have allowed bottomland to dry out.

24-INCH SNOWFALL...collapsed about 70% of tobacco greenhouses, says Jack Crowner (Kentucky Ag Network/Farm Service Network, Louisville). Jack says it will force a change in spring planting to traditional bedding and transportation of young plants from Florida. With the 10% allotment cut this year the greenhouse damage is not expected to have a major impact at planting time. He says it has been a learning experience for producers about the structural requirements of greenhouses and emergency measures that can be taken to save plants. Jack is covering the National Farm Machinery Show, February 16-19, the largest indoor farm show in the nation. About 400,000 people attend each year.

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SPECIAL AG PROGRAMMING...was featured by Larry Steckline (Mid America Ag Network, Wichita, KS) the week of February 7-11. Each day the network broadcast from a different city in the State, invited farmers to attend and ask questions of ag policy leaders in Washington, D.C. via satellite, and hear luncheon presentations by commodity and exchange traders. The final presentation featured the latest research on the healthful benefits of meat consumption. Over \$2,000 in prizes were given away each day.

FARMLAND...in Michigan could be taxed at a higher rate, says Rod Zamarron (Michigan Farm Radio Network, Lansing). The network is keeping listeners informed about school finance reform legislation which changes the distribution of funds to public schools, and the debate on tax rates. Rod replaces Owen Davis, who has joined a finance firm in Ann Arbor.

KEEP 'EM SAFE...remind producers to ventilate space heaters and enclosed animal pens.


 VIC POWELL
 Office of Communications